

A survey on the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Greek Graphic Arts Printing Industry

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Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility - CSR, is considered a dynamic concept taken seriously by companies of all business sectors. Research reveals that its importance increases over the years as it concerns the whole of society and, in essence, reflects its basic principles. Being a generic concept, it is interpreted quite diversely and is applied differently in various sectoral domains.

CSR has specific characteristics and guidelines. It is based on the fact that business organizations - companies are highly interested in influencing their economic, environmental and social efficiency, involving employees, consumers, local communities, investors and future generations. Hence, the existing literature presents several gaps in research on the actual application of CSR and the results in the overall progress of the companies.

An initial study in Greek business organizations reveals that CSR is applied mainly to large-scale corporations and companies, particularly in the banking and insurance sectors. In addition, there was no report or research concerning the Graphic Arts - Printing industry regarding the application of CSR concepts.

Therefore, research is focusing on the investigation of the application of CSR in the Printing Industry and in particular in the Greek Graphic Arts-Printing Industry. Among the fields to be investigated is the matching of the specific characteristics of the Printing sector with the guidelines/specifications of CSR concepts.

Further, it will be investigated whether and to what extent the Graphic Arts - printing companies do indeed apply CSR practices and, if so, which are the characteristics of CSR application. In addition, the study will concentrate on the potential benefits of CSR in the Graphic Arts - Printing industry companies which operate in Greece. A final research objective in which companies are affected by the integration and application of the practices such as Corporate Social Responsibility in the operation of companies of the sector in discussion.

The research will be conducted with the application of a structured questionnaire which will be distributed at the Greek Graphic Arts - Printing companies in Greece.

The collection of first responses from the companies will be analyzed so concrete outcomes can be derived at least at an initial phase on the actual contribution of CSR in the overall performance of the Graphic Arts - Printing Industry.

Introduction

We could say that business ethics is being integrated or trying to be integrated into companies through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which cannot be defined individually, nor has its meaning remained unchanged over the years in the business world. Research contributions are evolving into models and theories that are more in line with principles taken into account by a range of stakeholders, from utilitarian or share-centric approaches to other more integrated solutions. The establishment of regulatory frameworks through the examination of the requirements and requirements of stakeholders aims to provide conceptual reference frameworks and indicators as well as the institutional impetus to enable management and decision-making to take decisively into account the ethical dimension of problems or conflicts.

This paper attempts to gather the main conceptual contributions to the state and development of CSR in the Greek Printing - Graphic Arts Industry while providing information on future CSR studies, its aims and objectives, which, together with the interests and the positions of stakeholders, from different perspectives, increase the possibility of CSR analysis and give rise to different theories that will serve as a framework for the study of CSR in the Greek Printing - Graphic Arts Industry (Rodriguez-Gomez et al. 2020).

Research objectives

The goals and objectives of CSR have evolved over time. Initially, CSR was considered exclusively as a marketing tool with the ultimate goal of achieving legitimacy or improving the image of each company. However, nowadays, it is considered a fundamental strategic element by organizations, essential for the long-term viability of businesses (Dey et al. 2018). CSR has focused on and developed five distinct goals that have evolved over time. These goals coexist, sometimes within the company itself, adding complexity to CSR analysis (Carroll and Shabana 2010).

Research has shown that CSR is a marketing tool that helps improve the image, builds a good corporate reputation, and legitimizes the company's performance (Carroll and Shabana 2010; Wang and Gao 2016; Wójcik 2018). From this perspective, businesses only seek community acceptance for their activities (Wójcik 2018). It is observed, however, that the concept of reputation has been expanded to include all the beliefs and perceptions of different individuals and groups related to the actions of a particular company (Rothenhoefer 2019). In this regard, it is considered that the company carries out CSR actions to achieve or improve its corporate reputation (Wang and Gao 2016). In turn, most of these reputation studies are related to financial performance indicators or others that analyze the impact on stakeholder relations (Verčičand Čorić 2018).

The second goal of CSR is to achieve a competitive advantage by reducing business risk and associated costs. Some studies conclude that a company's environmental performance improves efficiency through reduced energy and resource costs, environmental compliance

costs, and other business-related costs (Lister 2018).

The third goal of CSR is to improve stakeholder relations (Pirnea et al. 2011). Through CSR, trust in the relationship between a company and its shareholders increases (Brower et al. 2017; Flammer 2018; Thorne et al. 2017). Because of this goal, the importance of disseminating information on CSR is emphasized, as it allows communication with different stakeholders, sending different signals to the market and receiving responses from it (Bae et al. 2018). Business reports usually reflect the information of a social and environmental nature (Havlová 2015).

The fourth goal of CSR is to create win-win scenarios. It is based on the idea that the simultaneous satisfaction of the stakeholders' requirements implies not only the benefit of the stakeholders and society in general but also the achievement of business goals of economic return (del Mar Miras-Rodríguez et al. 2014). CSR activities will have a positive impact on financial performance (Margolis and Walsh 2003; Orlitzky 2011; Rost and Ehrmann 2017) and could also be a tool for collaboration in the pursuit of mutual achievement between institutions and different stakeholders (Fisher et al. 2009; Lins et al. 2017; Spence et al. 2003).

The fifth CSR goal is long-term sustainability (Brønn and Vidaver-Cohen 2009; Marí-Farinós 2017; Schönherr et al. 2017). To this end, CSR must be integrated into the strategy and the various business actions, allowing the management of the three sectors included in the triple bottom line - the economic, the social and the environmental (Schönherr et al. 2017). This ensures that actions exceed short-term or meet immediate goals (Ashrafi et al. 2018).

The above objectives are interrelated and are not considered exclusive. Some studies show that in order to achieve the long-term goal of sustainability, other goals such as value creation (Ashrafi et al. 2018; Dyllick and Muff 2016), competitive advantage (Santos et al. 2009), legitimacy of actions, perception of the entity (Harjoto and Salas 2017; Tollin and Christensen 2019) and the credibility and credibility of the actions as a message to stakeholders ensure that the various stakeholders see their demands and interests adequately addressed (Kang et al. 2015).

Method

Literature study

The study of the literature was mainly based on research as well as official publications on CSR. Although they date back to the 1930s and continue to be relevant to academic journals, business journals, books, and exhibitions by international organizations and non-governmental organizations and associations, there is no recorded industry research or study of Graphic Arts - Printing. The literature on the subject is extensive but concerns other disciplines.

The original search was done for published journal articles using the search terms "corporate social responsibility," "CSR history," and "CSR evolution" in the science Direct, ProQuest and Web of Science web databases along with the Google search and Google Scholar. The first selection was limited to the titles of the publications, followed by a review of the keywords and abstracts of the preferred articles. The next step in selecting articles focused on their quality and relevance, which was determined by reviewing the journal's impact factor level as well as the number of citations the article had, specifically looking for a high impact factor

for each individual paper. Each article was then revised to determine its relevance to the research. Some articles showed additional references outside the original search field, which was then searched on the internet for review. This included business magazines, books and reports from international organizations and non-governmental organizations and associations. These references were reviewed and selected based on their relevance and contribution to this work. Following this systematic strategy has allowed the review of published journal articles with high impact ratios along with relevant publications cited by the authors of such articles.

In addition, the literature study was focused on finding data on the adoption of CSR practices and the degree of application and its importance for the Graphic Arts - Printing industry.

Survey

A questionnaire was developed to extract data on the assessments and views of organizations in the Graphic Arts - Printing sector on the adoption of CSR practices and the degree of implementation and importance. The questionnaire aimed to assess the degree of implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices by the Greek Graphic Arts - Printing Companies.

The questionnaire consisted of a set of questions that were divided into two main categories.

The first part deals with the practices followed and to what extent by the companies—the second concerns key elements of the business. To obtain reliable results, the decision was made to receive answers from individual branches of Graphic Arts - Printing. In addition,

the questionnaire was addressed to some experts in the field.

The questionnaire was distributed directly through Google Forms throughout Greece. The companies that participated in the survey are active in various printing sectors. A table of activity rates is given.

The response rate was considered quite satisfactory: 137 responses were received from all over Greece with the following structure:

- 59.6% Design – Creative – Print broker
- 36% Prepress
- 63.2% Printing
- 24.3% Packaging
- 25.7% Post Printing
- 2% Other business in printing

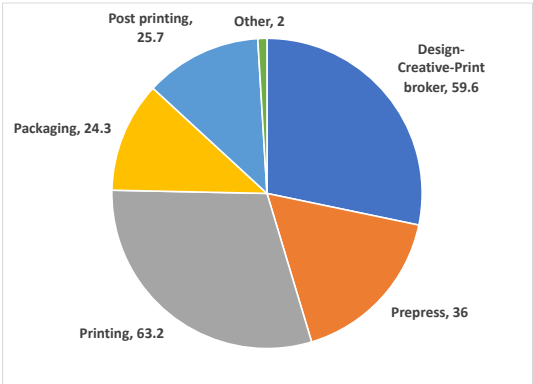


Figure 1: Industry by activity

Background

The concept of social responsibility dates back to antiquity. The first stage of CSR development occurred thousands of years ago. From the 1920s, a new stage began where social responsibility was not considered moral but became a whole new concept. However, the size of the concept was underestimated.

The ideology of corporate social responsibility (CSR) emerged in the last third of the 19th century. It emerged whether civil society institutions required companies to provide social guarantees to employees and ensure the protection of their work and the decline of trade unions in the mid-20th century for business owners updated the task of maintaining and maintaining loyalty to the incentives of the existing ones, which forced them to turn to CSR again. It was then that the idea was firmly established in the theory and practice of corporate governance in the USA.

However, the impact of globalization has played an important role in CSR, forcing companies to look for more creative ways to place information in a crowded world. CSR was thus the result of the profound transformation of the relationship between private enterprise and society in a post-industrial economy.

Characteristics of Greek Graphic Arts Printing enterprises

One of the most important characteristics of the graphic arts sector is that most enterprises are micro, small or medium-sized. In addition, there is a significant percentage of individual workers and entrepreneurs that are part of the graphic arts sector. Graphic designers, monteurs, electronic page-making workers and print job brokers can be mentioned (Sa-

logianni, Politis, 2021). According to Intergaf (the European Federation for Print and Digital Communication and its Industry Statistics), there are 110.000 Printing companies in Europe (20 national printing federations in 19 European countries), which employ some 600.000 employees and generate a € 79 billion turnover. 95% of the companies employ less than 20 employees. (INTERGRAF, 2022).

The situation seems not to be different in USA. According to IBIS statistics, in 2022, there are 44.981 printing companies in the US. California, Texas, and Florida have the highest number of businesses. There are 351.171 employees, and the average is 7.6 persons per company. The average business in the printing industry in the US now employs more workers than five years ago. The Printing industry in the US is the 4th ranked manufacturing industry by employment and the 103rd largest in the US. (IBISWorld).

According to data derived from the Greek Professional Catalog of Graphic Arts, in Greece, there are some 4.500 enterprises which employ some 17.000 employees. Self-employed persons and sole entrepreneurs are excluded. (Book of Graphic Arts).

An initial study of Greek business organizations reveals that 94,1% are registered as micro and small with less than 50 employees per company. Only 5,9% of them are registered as medium sized. Employees within these enterprises comprise 78% of the total workforce of the private sector. Additionally, 80% are family enterprises. A chart with responses from the survey shows below. (Salogianni, Politis, 2021).

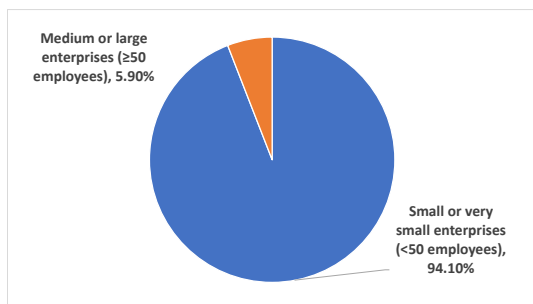


Figure 2: Business size

Results and Discussion

The questionnaire consisted of a set of questions that were divided into two main categories.

The first part deals with the practices followed and to what extent by the companies—the second concerns key elements of the business. To obtain reliable results, the decision was made to receive answers from individual branches of Graphic Arts - Printing. In addition, the questionnaire was addressed to some experts in the field.

The questionnaire was distributed directly through Google Forms throughout Greece.

From the research, we can come to the following conclusions:

In the first part, which deals with the administrative practices followed by the companies, from the answers we received, we observe that on a scale of 1 to 5

- 1 = Not at all,
- 2 = Very little,
- 3 = A little bit,
- 4 = Enough,
- 5 = Greatly

the averages of responses are:

- 1 = 13%
- 2 = 13%
- 3 = 24%
- 4 = 32%
- 5 = 18%

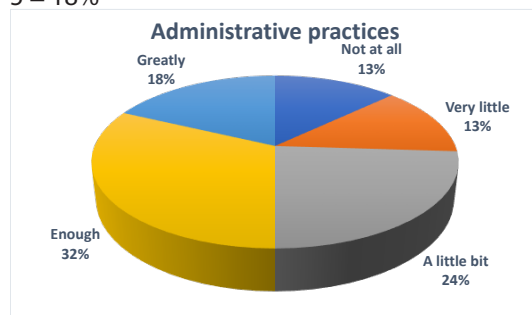


Figure 3: Administrative practices

Most of the companies that participated in the survey follow administrative practices related to CSR issues, and 55.9% have appointed a member of the company as a CSR manager who designs, coordinates, and implements related actions and practices.

In the part which deals with the environment practices followed by the companies, the answers we received are:

- 1 = 7%
- 2 = 9%
- 3 = 20%
- 4 = 30%
- 5 = 34%

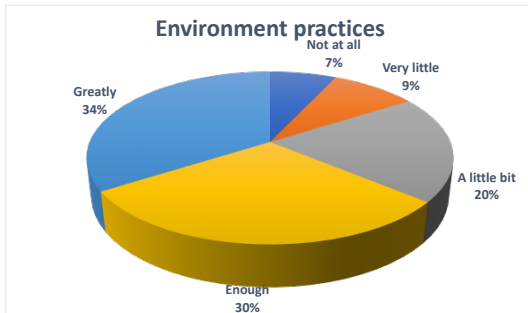


Figure 4: Environment practices

In the second research question concerning the environment, we observe that while a large percentage of companies are interested and follow practices and actions to reduce the impact on the environment from their operation, however, most are limited to the recycling of materials and waste. In contrast, the percentage varies significantly in terms of the consumption of electricity and/or fuel, water, and greenhouse gas (CO₂) emissions resulting from its activity.

In the part which deals with the employees' practices followed by the companies, the answers we received are as follows:

- 1 = 1%
- 2 = 2%
- 3 = 8%
- 4 = 25%
- 5 = 64%

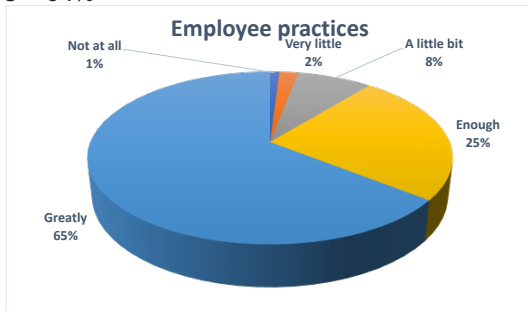


Figure 5: Employee practices

In the third research question, we observe that almost all companies follow practices that concern the best working conditions for their employees.

In the part which deals with the community practices followed by the companies, the answers we received are:

- 1 = 17%
- 2 = 15%
- 3 = 20%
- 4 = 22%
- 5 = 26%

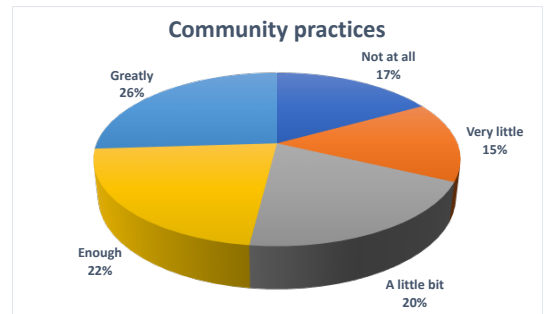


Figure 6: Community practices

The fourth research question concerning society shows that companies, in addition to practices focusing on the elimination of tax evasion, corruption and bribery, lag behind in matters aimed at improving the quality of life in the city as well as in matters aimed at solving common problems or issues related to the impact of the business on society and the environment.

In the part which deals with the purchase practices followed by the companies, the answers we received are:

- 1 = 5%
- 2 = 7%
- 3 = 19%
- 4 = 32%
- 5 = 37%

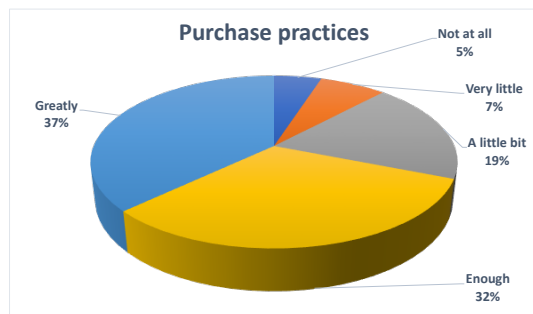


Figure 7: Purchase practices

CSR in the EU Graphic Arts-Printing Industry

According to research and publications carried out in Europe, most companies focus on three pillars of sustainability which include:

- Social
- Ecological
- Economical (Fespa 2021)

The scale of the challenge makes the case for social responsibility in restructuring clear. Even more, impetus can be gained from the range of poor practices in evidence. The following section looks at examples of poor industry practices, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that a socially responsible approach to restructuring is adopted and promoted industry-wide. It looks at the broad definition of social responsibility discussed by federations, companies, unions and staff representatives during the study workshops by Intergraf, as well as addressing the challenges identified by study participants.

So, as we can see from the study, examples of poor practice highlighted by participants in the study include:

- Staff made redundant at short notice, with no warning or opportunity to identify alternative employment

- Reduction in wages with no equivalent benefit (e.g., of working hours)
- Pressure on staff to take a pay cut to 'safeguard' their job – followed by redundancy
- Heavy reliance on temporary, casual and part-time staff
- Use of low-cost labour
- Outsourcing of print by large companies to SMEs at prices so low that costs are not covered
- Abuse of pre-pack agreements, which is leading to bankruptcies. Associated poor practices, for example, reducing staff wages, can also be a feature of pre-pack agreements. This issue is now so significant in the UK that the British Printing Industries Federation will no longer accept pre-pack companies into membership until the company has been solvent for two years and is actively lobbying for tightening rules.

The challenges of behaving in a socially responsible way were debated. All participants believed in building a sustainable future – potentially meaning unpalatable change. However, examples from across the industry show that a combination of open communication plus investment in training and development is more likely to result in people across the company accepting the need for change. (INTERGRAF, 2022)

As we can see, the European Union comprises approximately of 130,000 companies in the print sector. The main aim of the EU Ecolabel for printed paper products is to help companies to improve their environmental performance. Competent bodies should give advice and support applicants on their way to achieving the EU Ecolabel. During the pilot project "Capacity Building in the Member States for implementation of the EU Ecolabel for printed paper" on be-

half of the EU Commission, valuable experience was achieved. (ec.europa.eu, 2013)

But as we observe both in Greece and in Europe, most practices are limited to the area of recycling materials and especially paper.

Further research

The suggested strategy needs to be further implemented concerning its structure. In addition, it needs to be tested possibly through a pilot application that should take place. Further research is required for other components that are considered important for the development of this strategy. Further investigation is required regarding the issues of relationships and the interactions within the strategy.

The samples from the specific research show that CSR is beginning to occupy intensively the Greek companies in the sector, but it needs a great improvement and investigation of further fields

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Appendix

A questionnaire consisting of two parts was prepared for the purpose of this research. The first part includes questions about practices followed and to what extent by companies, and the second concerns key elements of the business. The questionnaire is presented below and was distributed to the Greek Graphic Arts - Printing companies from which 137 answers were collected.

Introduction to the questionnaire Doctoral Dissertation Questionnaire on Corporate Social Responsibility in Greek Graphic Arts - Printing Companies

Dear Businessman,
My name is Salogianni Thomaïs, and I conduct research in the context of my Ph.D. thesis, which I am preparing at the University of West Attica, under the supervision of Dr. Anastasios Politis, on "Business Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility in the Greek Graphic Arts - Printing Industry," for the evaluation of the degree of implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices by the Greek Graphic Arts Companies in which I invite you to participate. My initial goal is to spread the concept and idea of CSR, as well as CSR practices that companies can apply. At a second level, I aim, on the one hand, to capture the current situation in the field of CSR through the production of primary information for Greek companies and on the other hand, to develop creative thinking and contribute to educating the market about the importance of CSR for businesses.

I assure you that your answers are personal and strictly confidential. I invite you to participate with your time and experience, which are valuable to me.

Questions

I. Practices

On a scale of 1 to 5 please note the degree to which the following practices are actively promoted by your business:

Administrative practices

Q1. Have the key impacts/main effects of the business on the environment and society been identified?

Q2. Is the company committed to promoting environmental and social responsibility through its day-to-day operations?

Q3. Are the employees of the company aware and sufficiently informed about the CSR issues related to its activity?

Q4. Has a member of the company been appointed as CSR manager to plan, coordinate and implement related actions and practices?

Q5. Has the company prioritized the critical aspects of CSR related to the object of its activity?

Q6. Does the company know what its stakeholders are? That is, all those social partners that influence its operation and are influenced by it?

For the environment

Q7. Does the company plan and implement procedures and actions to reduce the environmental impact of its operation?

Q8. Does the company quantitatively monitor the consumption of electricity and / or fuel, water and greenhouse gas (CO₂) emissions resulting from its activity?

Q9. Does the company actively support the recycling of materials and the recycling of waste resulting from its activity?

For Employees

Q10. Is the protection of the health and safety of the members of the company promoted in its workplaces?

Q11. Is there regular and constructive communication between employees and the business owner regarding operational and not only issues?

Q12. Is the effective training and development of skills of the company's staff encouraged?

Q13. Is gender equality, workplace diversity and the avoidance of any forms of discrimination between employees supported?

Q14. Is the elimination of situations of forced and / or unpaid overtime work advocated?

For the community

Q15. Does the company participate in voluntary actions and initiatives of local character with the general aim of improving the quality of life in the city?

Q16. Is consultation with local bodies, citizens' organizations and/or local NGOs promoted in order to solve common problems or issues related to the company's impact on society and the environment?

Q17. Does the company promote the elimination of tax evasion, corruption and bribery?

For the purchase

Q18. Does the company examine whether its main suppliers and cooperating companies are environmentally and socially responsible?

Q19. Is customer satisfaction promoted by defending the quality of the products and / or services offered by the company?

Q20. Is there an accurate description-labelling of the products and / or services offered by the company but also the absence of vague or any misleading information to customers?

II. BASIC ELEMENTS OF BUSINESS

Q21. Company name

Q22. Business size

Small or very small enterprises (<50 employees)

Medium or large enterprises (≥ 50 employees)

Q23. Industry of activity Design – Creative –

Print broker Prepress

Printing Packaging Post Printing

Other business in printing

Q24. Contact e-mail

The companies that participated in the survey are active in various sectors of printing. A table of activity rates is given.

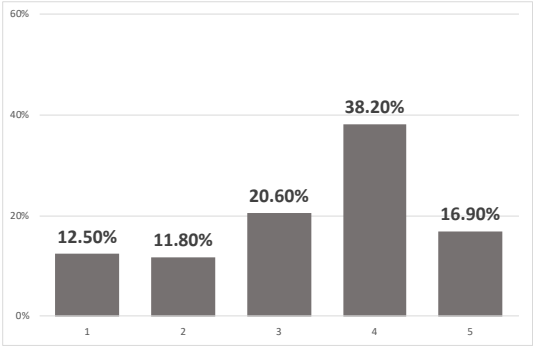
Answers:

I. Practices

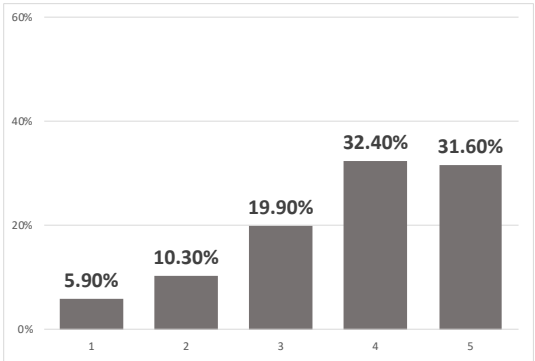
On a scale of 1 to 5 please note the degree to which the following practices are actively promoted by your business.

Administrative practises

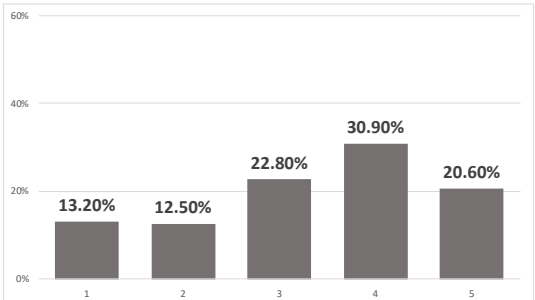
Q1. Have the key impacts/main effects of the business on the environment and society been identified?



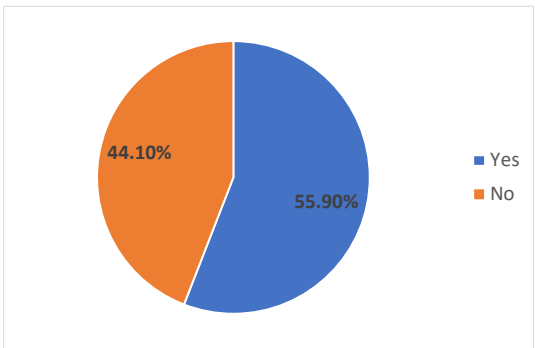
Q2. Is the company committed to promoting environmental and social responsibility through its day-to-day operations?



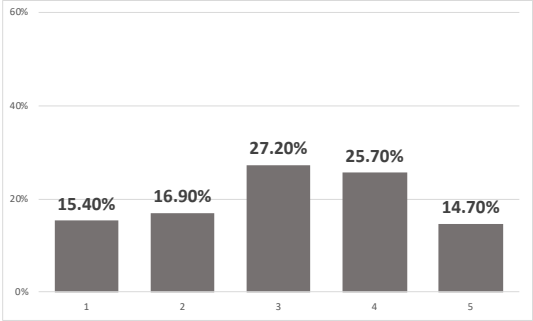
Q3. Are the employees of the company aware and sufficiently informed about the CSR issues related to its activity?



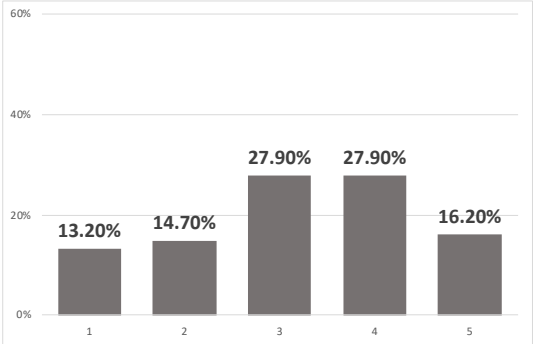
Has a member of the company been appointed as CSR manager to plan, coordinate and implement related actions and practices?



Q5. Has the company prioritized the critical aspects of CSR related to the object of its activity?

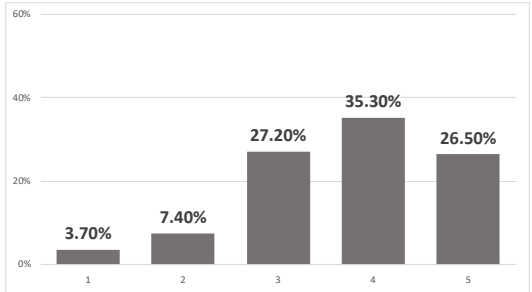


Q6. Does the company know what its stakeholders are? That is, all those social partners that influence its operation and are influenced by it?

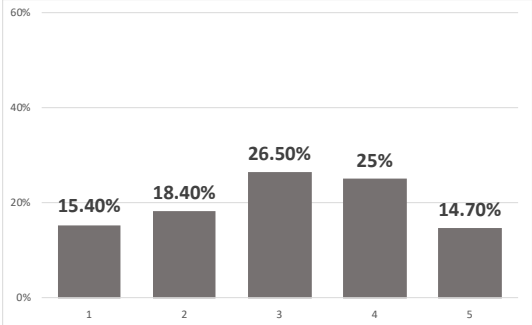


For the environment

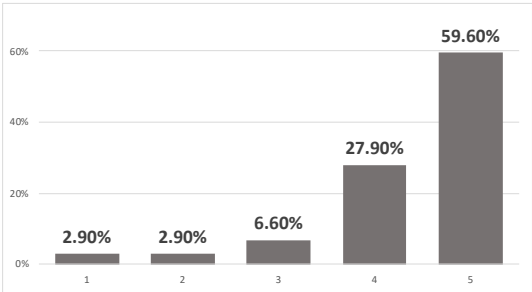
Q7. Does the company plan and implement procedures and actions to reduce the environmental impact of its operation?



Q8. Does the company quantitatively monitor the consumption of electricity and / or fuel, water and greenhouse gas (CO₂) emissions resulting from its activity?

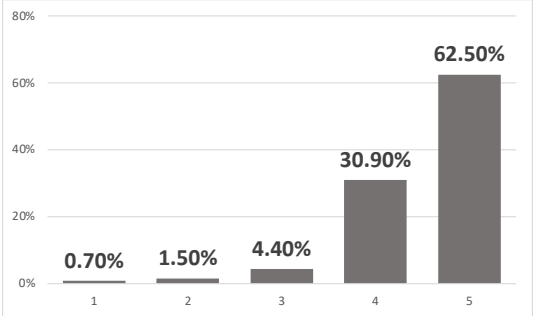


Q9. Does the company actively support the recycling of materials and the recycling of waste resulting from its activity?

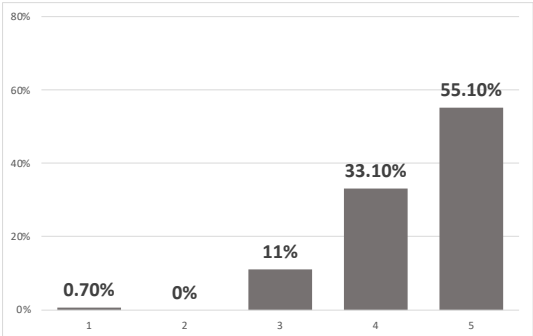


For employees

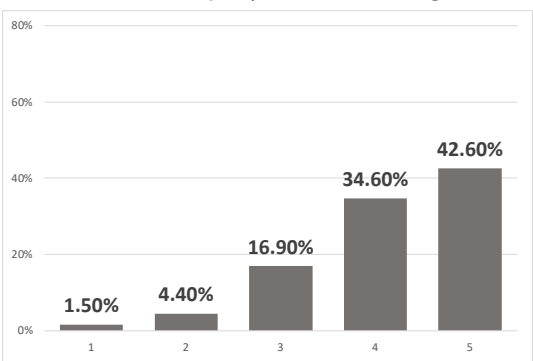
Q10. Is the protection of the health and safety of the members of the company promoted in its workplaces?



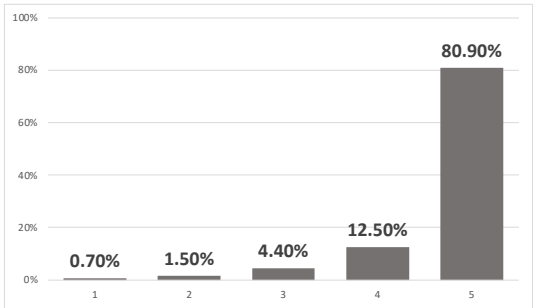
Q11. Is there regular and constructive communication between employees and the business owner regarding operational and not only issues?



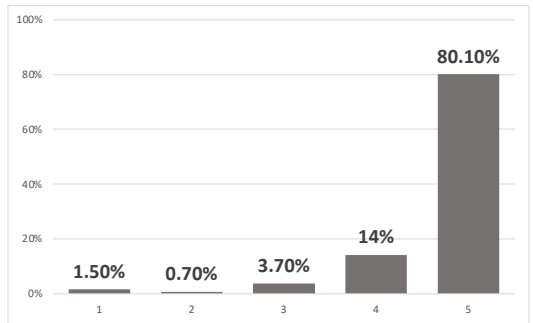
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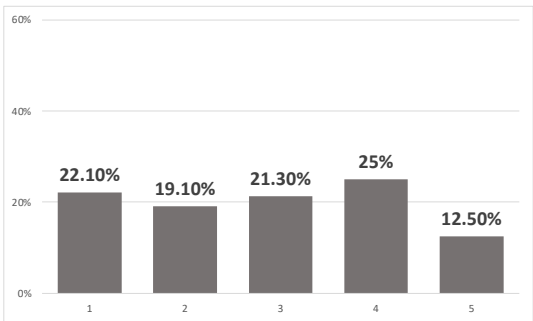


Q14. Is the elimination of situations of forced and / or unpaid overtime work advocated?

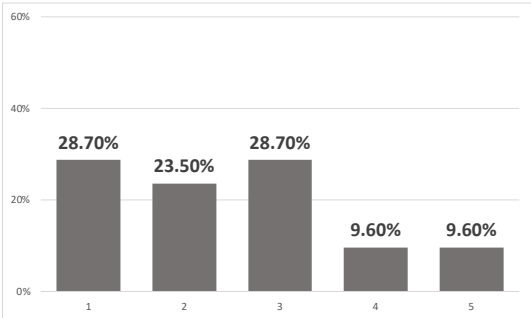


For the community

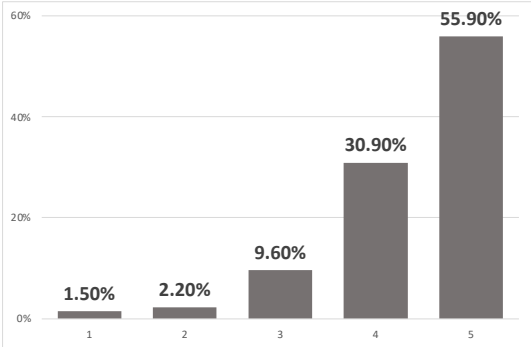
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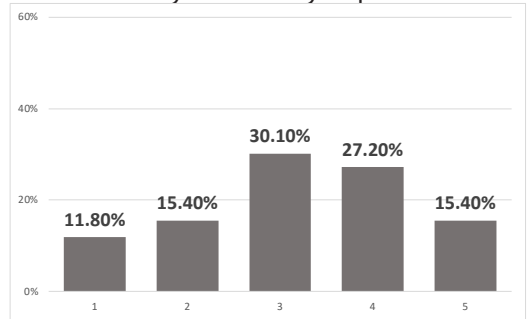


Q17. Does the company promote the elimination of tax evasion, corruption and bribery?

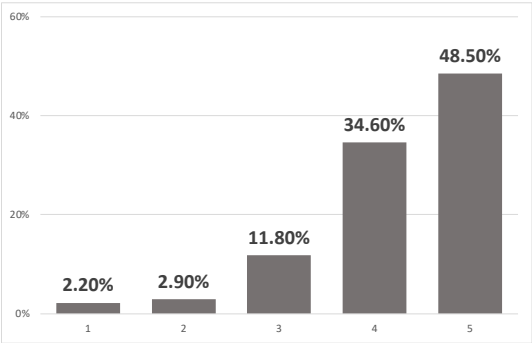


For the purchase

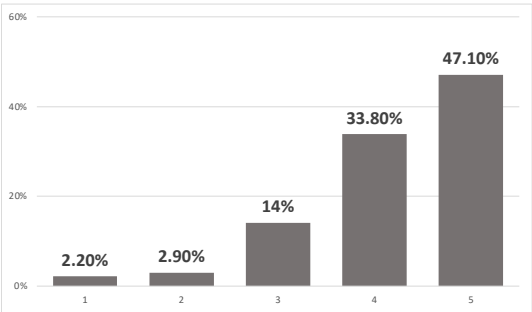
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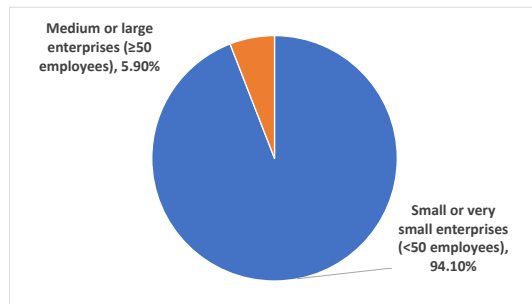
II. BASIC ELEMENTS OF BUSINESS

Q21. Company name

Q22. Business size

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Medium or large enterprises (≥ 50 employees)



Q23. Industry of activity

- Design- Creative – Print broker
- Prepress
- Printing
- Packaging
- Post Printing
- Other business in printing

Q24. Contact e-mail

Industry of activity

137answers

Design – Creative – Print
broker Prepress
Printing

Other business in

